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March 17, 1959

MAGILLISH TALKS
Washington, March 19-23, 1959

Soviet Note of March 2 and Prospective
Intergovernmental Conference

Position Paper

The attached position paper was drafted by EE - Messure, Frazee and MacSwiney. This paper replaces an earlier paper on the subject, E-1/1, which should be destroyed.

The attached paper reflects an interbureau discussion in the Acting Secretary's office on March 16. It is circulated for your information.

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MACMILLAN TALKS

Washington, March 19-23, 1959

SOVIET NOTE OF MARCH 2 and PROSPECTIVE INTERGOVERNMENTAL
CONFERENCE

(Position Paper).

(To be raised at U.S. initiative)

Anticipated British Position

The British believe that negotiations are necessary in order to determine whether or not a compromise can be worked out with the Soviets or whether we must face the alternatives of war with the Soviet Union or diplomatic defeat entailing, among other things, the loss of West Berlin.

The British apparently are convinced that meaningful discussions can be held only with Khrushchev. Therefore they strongly desire a Summit meeting. In any event, they want negotiations to take place in some form. They have accepted a Foreign Ministers' meeting but feel strongly that our reply to the Soviet note should contain a fixed date for a Summit meeting and that the latter should not be contingent on progress at the Foreign Minister level. They have suggested the last week of July or the first week of August for the Summit meeting. They believe that fixing a date for the latter would make a Foreign Ministers' meeting more productive.

The British have been proposing an agenda for the Foreign Ministers' meeting which closely conforms to the Soviet proposed agenda. They have indicated willingness to agree to our agenda formula if we accept their proposal for fixing a Summit meeting date.

While the British do not attach great importance to the matter of participation by Poland and Czechoslovakia in a Foreign Ministers' meeting, they have been willing to accept our formula as an initial position. However, the German Foreign Office has indicated that Macmillan and Adenauer agreed to have these countries admitted as observers in order to forestall an Italian demand for participation.

The British believe that the fixing of a date for a Summit meeting would minimize the possibility of precipitant unilateral Soviet action. Macmillan agreed with Adenauer that Khrushchev should be told that any Western proposal for a Summit meeting would be made only on the understanding that unilateral Soviet action would not occur, but there was no agreement as to whether this should be done through diplomatic channels or in the reply to the Soviet note.

Recommended U. S. Position

A meeting at the Foreign Ministers' level seems most appropriate for at

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least the initial discussions. Such a meeting should be substantive in order that the West may make its position clear and attempt to gain some indication of Soviet intentions. At a minimum such a Foreign Ministers' meeting would serve to make clear to world public opinion the merit of the Western position. Should the Foreign Ministers' meeting give promise of progress at a Summit conference, the U. S. will be prepared to participate in such a Summit conference at any reasonable place and time.

We believe that the Four Powers involved should undertake the initial discussions in view of their primary responsibility for solution of the German problem. German advisors should be invited for consultation. We should resist inclusion of Poland and Czechoslovakia, as suggested by the Soviet Union in its effort to achieve "parity". Possible enlargement of the conference to include other interested governments would depend on the course of the negotiations.

We should make clear to the Soviets in our reply that any unilateral action by them to alter the existing situation with regard to Allied access to Berlin could be expected to have a detrimental effect on prospects for fruitful negotiations at any level.



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